ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Server-to-user delivery of a data stream associated with a service provided by the server is effectuated by selecting the server and, automatically and without manual intervention, providing in a communication path that is to be used for the delivery a proxy

5   that performs a proxy operation on the data stream during the delivery. A proxy can be automatically installed in a communication path through a data network. In response to an installation request, a communication port for coupling to the communication path is automatically allocated and a proxy to support data flow through the communication port is automatically loaded. The proxy is operable for performing a proxy operation on the data

10   stream. In maintaining proxies in a communication path used to deliver from a server to a user a data stream associated with a service provided by the server, it can be determined when a first proxy in the communication path is not performing its proxy function within the communication path. In response to such a determination, a replacement proxy can be provided in the communication path automatically and without manual intervention. The

15   replacement proxy replaces the first proxy in the communication path to perform the proxy function of the first proxy.

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